CHILDREN'S BOOK
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LOS ANGELES

A

DAY'S RAMBLE

IN DERBYSHIRE;

OR,

THE TRAVELS OF

TOMMY WILSON AND BILLY PASSMORE;

INTERSPERSED WITH

OBSERVATIONS AND ANECDOTES.

Ornamented with Six Beautiful Copper-Plates.

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1806

A

DAY's RAMBLE, &c.

CHAP. I.

AT a village in Derbyshire lived two families that had retired from London, in order to spend the evening of life, in quiet and relaxation from business. They were both, in easy circumstances. George Wilson had been a linen-draper in Cheapside, and had by industry gathered an estate worth ten thousand pounds: Robert Passmore (the other of these citizens) had kept a shop of fancy goods, and, when he retired, resigned his business to his eldest son; reserving a sufficient stock in the Funds to maintain him decently, in the country. Having been intimately acquainted in the city, they kept up their friendship, in the place of their retirement. Their children were educated at the same school, and lived on as sociable terms as the parents, particularly the

two younger sons, who were nearly of the same age.

Tommy Wilson was twelve years old: he could read and write well, and understood most of the common rules in Gough's Arithmetic. Billy Passmore was six months and a few days younger, and, though a lively good natured boy, was less attentive to his learning, and of course was not quite so good a scholar. Billy was rather too fond of amusement, particularly rambling among the neighbouring farms, and viewing the fields, orchards and meadows; though he was never known to rob any farmer of his fruit, or to do him any other injury, knowingly.

As the parents were religious people, and had made their estates by honest industry, they taught their children early to love truth and justice—to speak the truth on all occasions, as honourable when it was against themselves, and to avoid theft, however small, as one of the meanest of vices.

CHAP. II.

IT was the custom of these young friends, once or twice a year, to make excursions together, a few miles round the village; and, one morning in mid-summer, they engaged in one of these country rambles—having first obtained the consent of their parents, without which they never ventured so far from home.

In the course of their walk, just as they were descending one of the mountains, of which there are many in Derbyshire, they heard the cry of hounds in full chase. They stopped suddenly; the sound drew nearer and nearer; they began to be alarmed, not knowing whether it would be better to stand still, or to fly. At length, they concluded to remain where they were, as they knew not what way to retreat for more safety.

While the two young travellers were considering what to do, a hare sprang from the outskirt of a wood, and a pack of hounds pursued close after it. The little creature had hardly entered the cleared ground, almost spent with running, be-

fore the swiftest of the dogs overtook it and seized it by one of its hind legs. The concern of the lads for their own safety now gave way to pity for the poor hare, which they saw was in danger of being devoured by the dogs. Indeed, Billy Passmore was so agitated that he proposed, to his companion, to attack the dogs with stones, and had already grasped two large pebbles in his hands: but Tommy Wilson, who was a cool, considerate lad declared that it was too dangerous an undertaking; the dogs might turn and attack them; and they might be torn to pieces, as well as the poor hare. They concluded, therefore, it was prudent to escape as quickly as they could, and leave the hare to her hard fortune, as they could give her no assistance.

Humanity to brutes is a commendable virtue in children: it is a great crime, indeed, to cause pain to any of God's creatures, unnecessarily; and to assist them, when in distress, is a real virtue, if it can be done without injuring one's-self. But we should not forget that prudence is a virtue also, and that self-preservation is one of its first precepts. Had our lads attacked those enraged dogs, who were all eager to seize their prey, it is very likely they would have been torn to peices,

and their deaths would have caused great sorrow to their parents. It was wise in them, therefore, to leave the place, when their stay was so dangerous, without being of any use to the hare.

Dogs, though they will bear the lash from their masters, or keepers patiently, are often very cross to strangers; and in children it is, at all times, very imprudent to provoke them. Will Thoughtless had like to have lost one of his legs by the bite of a dog that he used to provoke, for mere sport, as he travelled to and from school.

CHAP. III.

HAVING stopped at a cottage that was about a mile distant from the spot where they left the hare and the hounds, the boys asked for a cup of water to drink; for the heat of the day and their exercise had made them thirsty. GOODY GENTLE (for this was the name of the mistress of the house) brought them a noggin full of milk; and, as they seemed to be weary, she invited them to walk in and refresh themselves with cottage-fare some brown bread and cheese. She was a kind old woman, and as she observed that the lads were modest and well-behaved, she was pleased to offer them the best fare she had at hand. A decent, modest behaviour, in young boys, seldom fails to meet with a favourable notice, and a suitable reward, from all good people. The house where they met with this friendly entertainment was a small white building, almost surrounded with flowering shrubberry, and seemed like the abode of cleanlines and industry.

"I perceive," said the good old woman, "that you seem fatigued: have you walked many miles to-day?" "Not many miles," replied Tommy Wilson, "but we have been distressed by seeing a little hare seized by a hound, which we apprehend, by this time, is torn in pieces. Indeed, we fled from the place, as we thought ourselves were not quite free from danger, there being several dogs in the pack."—"You are very happy, my dear little boys," replied Goody Gentle, "in having escaped from so much danger unhurt; and, I hope, when you have left my house, you will return home, as quickly as you can. Remember that your parents are anxious about you, as long as you are absent from them, and that it is your duty to make them easy as soon as you can. I hope these huntsmen and hounds will not pass through my fields or garden, for such a company did me much damage last year. A little hare ran through my garden; the hounds and the huntsman followed after; and together they trod down most of my cabbages, and every thing else that was in their way. I complained of the damage they had done me, but they were too eager for the

sport, and in too great a hurry, to listen to the complaints of a poor old woman. Great and rich folks think too lightly of the misfortunes of the poor."

CHAP. IV.

AFTER eating their bread and cheese, and resting about half an hour, Thomas and William thanked Goody Gentle for her hospitality, and continued their ramble.—The country before them had a most charming apearance. On one side, they beheld the richest crops of grain waving in the wind, and, on another, extensive meadows covered with cattle: here, the birds sheltered from the heat of the sun, among the thickest branches of the trees, whistled their wild notes merrily, and there the squirrels were leaping from branch to branch. Billy Passmore was particularly pleased with three of these little active creatures which seemed to be tamer than the rest. Two of them were seated on the broken limbs of an ancient elm, and a third seemed in the action of leaping upwards from the ground. All of them had fine bushy tails, and were enjoying the sunshine of a mild summer's day. "How fortunate it is for these little creatures," said Billy to his companion, "that they can so easily

place themselves out of the reach of wicked hounds: they can run up the first high tree they meet with, and find safety." But Billy did not reflect that man is often a more dangerous enemy to the little squirrels, than the hounds are to the hare. By means of a fowling piece, some powder and shot, he can tumble them down, in an instant, from the loftiest branches. Squirrels as well as other creatures were created for the use of man; that is, to furnish him with food when he really wants it, or to perform for him a reasonable labour; yet it is a great crime, either to destroy brutes wantonly, or to treat them cruelly. The Scriptures inform us that "a righteous man regardeth the life of his beast." Dick Hawgee, the carter, never reads his bible or any other good book, or he would not beat his horses so cruelly, when the poor creatures do their best to serve him. The other day they were straining up hill, under a load too heavy for them; but because they halted a little to recover breath, the brutal carter came up, and beat them with the but-end of his whip, most unmercifully. But what can be expected from a fellow that swears profanely

and is so often drunk on the road. Drunkenness and profane swearing are such abominable vices, that nothing good can be expected from a man who is guilty of them.

CHAP. V.

THE next remarkable place that attracted the notice of our travellers was the barn-yard of a cottage: here they saw an old woman, with a broom in her hand, endeavouring to frighten away a hawk that was just ready to pounce on her chickens. The cock and the hen were looking up with terror at the enemy hovering over their heads, and the chickens were so scared they hardly knew where to run with safety. The barn-yard was in an uproar.

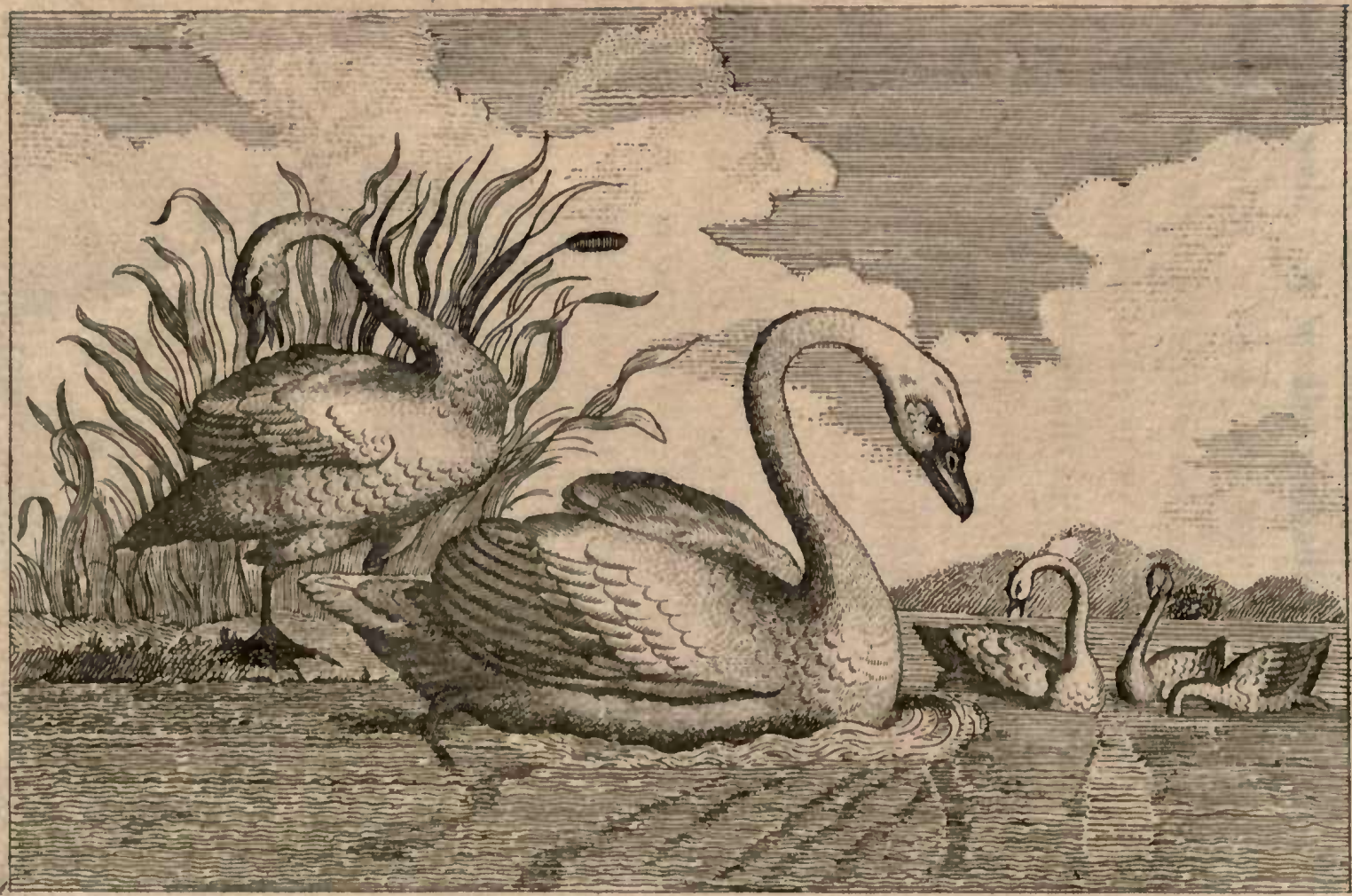
The outcry of the fowls had drawn out Goody Careful, just as Tommy Wilson and Billy Passmore approached the garden fence. They joined their efforts to put the hawk to flight, by shouting and throwing up their hats; which had a good effect for he soon wheeled round and flew away.

How wise a regulation of providence is it, that Hawks and others birds of prey, are not great breeders: were they as prolific as tame fowl, it wonld hardly be possible for the farmer to raise any poultry. In the course of a year, this cruel

bird destroys many chickens; sometimes he will even carry off a well grown pullet. But he is a more generous enemy than a night owl, and perhaps less destructive to poultry. He attacks his prey by day-light, and always shews himself hovering in the air, a considerable time, before he darts on the fowls; whereas the owl steals on them, in the dark, and sometimes carries them off asleep.

Goody Careful was not of so kind a disposition as her neighbour Gentle; for though the lads had done her no injury, but on the contrary, had endeavoured to serve her, by shouting and throwing up their hats to frighten the hawk, she was angry and scolded them. It seems they had disturbed her fowls also, though unintentionally, and she was uncivil enough to upbraid them with it. They assured her that they had no intention to offend, and were sorry that she had mistaken their design: but she was too much out of humour to be so easily pacified, and ordered them, in a very angry tone, to depart. The boys were justly displeased with this injurious treatment, but thought it would be improper in them to stand and dispute with an aged person, though she was in an

error. They therefore immediately left her, without making any reply, as they believed that, however mild, it would probably increase her ill-humour.



CHAP. VI.

TOMMY WILSON was as fond of water scenes as his companion was of the fields and meadows: they turned their steps therefore towards the river Dove, one of the finest rivers in Derbyshire. Approaching the banks by a gentle descent, they beheld a flock of beautiful swans floating down its stream, than which there is hardly a more pleasing sight in nature. The soft downy breasts, and fine arching necks, of this noble bird, makes it appear to the greatest advantage on water. As they depend on water principally for food, they delight in it so much, that it is on this element they are mostly to be seen.

> The swan, with whom no bird can vie,
> For softness, and for majesty;
> With crest erect, and stately pride,
> On silver streams delights to glide.

The poets tell us that they sing their own funeral dirge, just before their death: but however this may be they are more remarkable for their fine white colour, and majectic appearance, than the melody of their notes.

Though the lads were charmed with this sight, and wished to stay longer to enjoy it, the time of day could not permit them: their shadows began to lengthen, by the approach of evening; and they were obliged to depart, though they would fondly have staid longer.

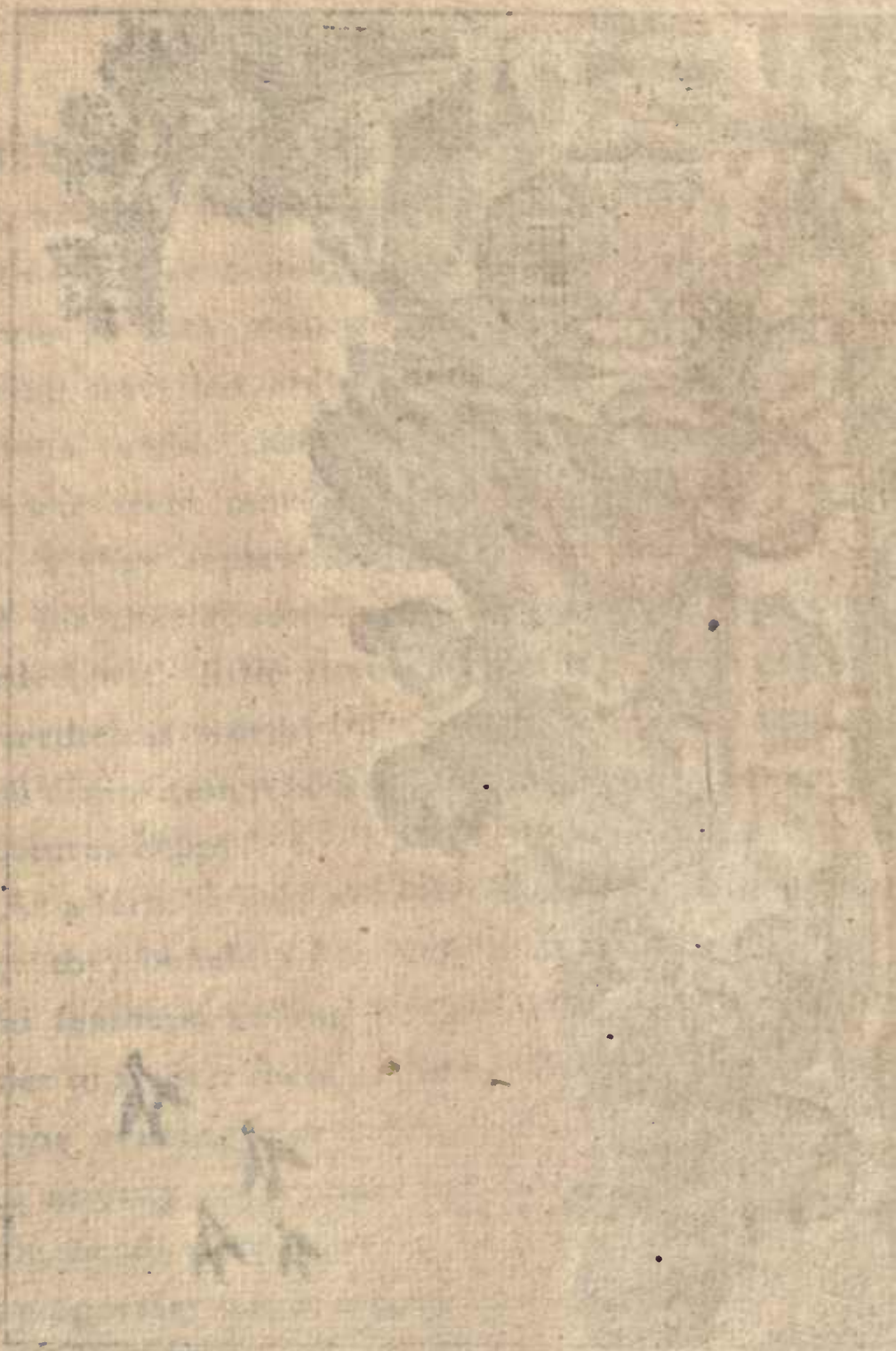
After leaving the bank of the river Dove, our juvenile travellers struck across the country, in the nearest course towards the village where they resided. Passing over a large common that was occupied principally as a sheep pasture, they stopped a short time to notice a shepherd tending his fleecy care. By his side stood his faithful dog Jowler, who was always ready, either to defend the flock from an enemy, or to recall any of the sheep that attempted to stray beyond the limits of the pasture. It is remarkable how docile the sheep and the dog are under the discipline of an experienced shepherd. Seldom has he occasion to repeat the same order twice. Were children as attentive to the commands of their parents and tutors, as those brutes are to their keeper, how much easier would it be to educate them, and how much happier would they be themselves?

The occupation of a shepherd was, in ancient time, a very honourable one, and the wealth of princes consisted principally in the greatness of their flocks. Jacob, the Patriach, tended the flocks of Laban the Assyrian, as David, who was afterwards King of Israel, did those of his father Jesse. But the care of sheep is now generally entrusted to poor men and boys, who gain a living by the business. The largest flocks of sheep known, at the present time, are those of Spain, which travel from one province to another, in quest of pasturage. A single nobleman has sometimes possessed forty thousand sheep, which were divided into several flocks, and put under the care of as many shepherds. This is a larger number than Job owned, even in his greatest prosperity, though he "was the greatest of all the men of the East," and the "Lord had blessed his latter end more than his beginning," for he had only fourteen thousand sheep, besides camels, and oxen and asses.

CHAP. VII.

THE pleasures of the day were nearly exhausted, and our little travellers were not far from home. They beheld the smoak of the village chimneys with pleasure; for they were weary, having travelled eight or ten miles, in their circuitous ramble through the country. But there was one scene more which they stopped to view before they separated. It is a common sight, and for that reason is often overlooked, or regarded with little attention: *but* they deemed it nevertheless worthy of notice; for to boys of a kind disposition it affords pleasure to see all other creatures happy.

At a farm-house, near the outskirts of the village they beheld a fine large hen, with her beautiful feathers, calling her chickens together, in order to shelter them under her wings, as the dew of the evening was falling. Some of the brood had already crept under her downy breast, their little heads only were to be seen; others were sipping water out of a large bason—see that little



chicken, said Billy, how it turns up its bill, to let the water trickle down its throat; and one was perched on its mother's back, as if it were loth to retire from play so soon.

What tenderness does a hen discover for her young brood? All day long is she busily employed, in scratching for their food, and, when she has found a grain of wheat, how earnestly does she call them to pick it up? when she sees them running into danger, what anxiety does she express? and, as night, or foul weather approaches, how does she invite them to shelter themselves under her wings? So conspicuous indeed are the care and tenderness of a hen for her chickens, that the Saviour of the world condescended to compare with them his own solicitude for the welfare of his countrymen, the Jews:—"Oh Jerusalem, Jerusalem!" said he, when he wept over that devoted city, "how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not."

CHAP. VIII.

THOMAS and William now separated, each going directly home, anxious to see their parents, their brothers and sisters: but, before they parted, they joined hands affectionately, and wished each other a good night.

When Tommy Wilson reached home, his father took occasion, in the evening, to require from him some account of his day's ramble—what he had seen, in his walks, that was most remarkable; at what places he and his companion had stopped; and what entertainment they met with. Tommy related every particular he could recollect, that he thought would give his father pleasure. He dwelt largely on the morose behaviour of Goody Careful, for it had wounded his feelings; and desired his father would take an opportunity to convince the old woman how much she had wronged him and his companion. Perhaps, if she were made sensible of her mistake, she would treat them better, when they called again to see her: otherwise he would certainly always avoid

the house.—"Old people, and especially the poor," observed the father, "meet with many things to sour their tempers, and they are not always sufficiently guarded, though it is their duty, to watch against a peevish disposition. It will sometimes shew itself, even against those who have given no occasion for it, as in your case; but I am glad, my son, that, notwithstanding the provocation, you did not forget the respect which at all times you, as well as all other little boys, owe to old age."

As Tommy detailed his narrative, his father made minutes, and at his leisure, reduced them into the form of travels, adding an introductory chapter at the beginning. From him a Bookseller in the metropolis obtained the manuscript, and was induced to publish it for the entertainment of good little boys; who are wise enough to lay out their money, in purchasing useful books, rather than toys which steal away their attention from learning, or luxuries that spoil their stomachs and render their wits dull.